



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Maine*

Margaret Chase Smith Federal Building (207) 945-0373

*202 Harlow Street, Room 111 Fax No. (207) 945-0319
Bangor, ME 04401 TTY No. (207) 945-0307
www.usdoj.gov/usao/me*

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Contact: John H. Nichols
Special Assistant United States Attorney
Tel: (207) 945-0373

Medway Man Sentenced on Federal Drug and Social Security Fraud Charges

Bangor, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby announced that **Michael Donato**, 49, of Medway, was sentenced on February 3, 2010, in U.S. District Court in Portland, Maine, to 22 months of imprisonment, 3 years supervised release, a \$300 special assessment, and restitution of \$43,675, for the federal crimes of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribute marijuana and failure to disclose information with intent to fraudulently secure SSI and SSDI benefits. Donato pleaded guilty on June 25, 2009.

Court records reveal that between 2003 and May 2007, Donato was a primary supplier of marijuana in Millinocket, Maine. In the last 3 years of his involvement in the conspiracy, Donato sold approximately 290 lbs of marijuana. Donato paid his drug supplier more than \$530,000 during the course of the conspiracy.

In 1995, claiming he was unable to work due to a back injury, Donato applied for and received Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits (Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income). As a recipient of SSA benefits, Donato was required to notify SSA of any change in his employment condition or of any event that could affect his right to receive benefits. During the period of his involvement in the drug conspiracy, Donato failed to report any of his work (drug trafficking) activity and/or income from the drug trafficking to the SSA. As a result, he received larger payments than he should have, or in some instances, when he should have received none at all. In 2007, Donato lied on SSA Disability Review Reports he was required to submit to SSA.

United States Attorney Silsby praised the investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection and Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General.

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